

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-7 are pending in the present application; Claims 1, 2, and 4-7 are amended, and Claim 3 is canceled by the present amendment. Claims 1, 6, and 7 are amended to include the subject matter of original Claim 3, which is indicated as allowable. Amendments to Claims 2, 4, and 5 are supported by the original Claims 2, 4, and 5. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 1 was objected to for informalities; Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph; Claims 1, 2, and 4-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Chotoku et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,728,473); and Claim 3 was objected as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In response to the objection to Claim 1, Claim 1 has been amended to recite "configured to reduce." Accordingly the objection to Claim 1 is believed to have been overcome. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to Claim 1 be withdrawn.

In response to the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Claim 2 has been amended to recite, "said preservation mechanism." Accordingly the rejection of Claim 2 is believed to have been overcome. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 2 be withdrawn.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, Claims 1, 6, and 7 have been amended to include the subject matter of original Claim 3, which is indicated as allowable, and Claim 3 has been canceled. Accordingly, the rejection of Claims 1, 2, and 4-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and the objection to Claim 3 is moot.

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Reply to Office Action of April 21, 2006.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendment, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.


Respectfully submitted,

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